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Hecklers disrupt CIA

By JIM KEEGSTRA

State News Staff Writer

Twenty to 30 people questioned, heckled and laughed at a Central Intelligence Agency branch chief on campus Tuesday.

Philip A. True, head of the East Asia Branch of the CIA Office of Basic and Geographic Intelligence, was invited by the MSU Geography Dept. Colloquium Committee to speak on applied geographic research in the CIA.

The protesters, representing the Young Socialist Alliance and the Southern African Liberation Committee, packed the back of a small room in the Natural Science Building and spilled into the hall. Approximately 25 other people attending seemed to be nonprotesters.

Before True was introduced, Barbara Riemer, asst. professor of psychology, stated the protesters' position that the CIA has no right to speak at MSU because of its active suppression of democratic freedoms.

An older geography major who could not get into the room said: "It's unfair that these protesters should create a stir and take seats away from those who want to hear. They should make their point at the beginning and then leave."

A single page statement handed out by the protesters at the door, claimed:

•The CIA is attempting to suppress publication of the book "Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia" by Alfred McCoy, which documents CIA participation in heroin traffic.

•The CIA is in court to stop a former agent from publishing his memoirs.

•The MSU Vietnam Project from 1955 to 1961 was used as a front for the CIA, violating the Geneva convention.

The handout also claimed that the CIA "subverts the basic human rights of life and liberty and democratic self-determination," citing "well documented involvement" in Cambodia, Laos, Chile, Brazil, Guatemala, Iran and Greece. True remained calm, ignoring heckling and giggling throughout his 25-minute description of what CIA geographers and cartographers do.

When True finished, Bill Buckler, Geography Dept. graduate assistant, said: "On behalf of those here, I thank you for your talk and apologize for the disruptions."

Asked about geographical research behind the bombing of the Red River dikes in North Vietnam, True said no information on that had been requested from his department as far as he knew.

After failing to respond to several long, complex questions from protesters, True was asked if he was under orders not to answer.

"If I don't know, I can't answer," True said. "The questions seemed more like statements to me."

At the end, True thanked the group for an interesting and stimulating hour, and said he would be willing to come back to MSU anytime. Several persons shouted,

Michigan State News, East Lansing



Out now

Tim Cain holds a sign in the Natural Science Bldg. protesting the presence of a representative of the Central Intelligence Agency who visited campus Tuesday. The representative, Philip A. True, spoke about geographic research in the CIA.

State News photo by Julie Blough

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